

Amendments to the claims:

1.-47. (Canceled)

48. (Currently amended): A computer network including a multi-tier licensing system comprising:

a user tier including user computers;

a remote node tier including remote nodes enabling users to run a licensed software program, at least some remote nodes allowing multiple users at multiple user computers to run the licensed software program concurrently, the remote nodes producing counts of the numbers of licensed software users associated with the remote nodes; and

a master node tier including a master node receiving the counts from the remote nodes and calculating a total number of licensed software users, the master node evaluating a license allocation condition using the total number of licensed software users, wherein the master mode initiates a license lockout grace period if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a maximum number of licenses.

49. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein the remote nodes and master node run licensing software.

50. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein the master node is selected as the master node from the nodes running the licensing software.

51. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein the remote nodes serve the licensed software to the users in the user tier.

52. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein a sanity scan is done on at least one subset of the remote nodes.

53. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 52, wherein a scan result message is sent to the master node with at least some of the counts.

54. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 53, wherein the master node checks whether the scan result messages has been received from all of the remote nodes and deallocates any licenses allocated to users of any of the nodes from which a scan result message has not been received.

55.-56. (Canceled):

57. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 55, wherein the master node sends a warning message if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a ~~predetermined value~~ limit that is less than the maximum number of licenses.

58. (Canceled):

59. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein the counts are sent to the master node asynchronously.

60. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein the counts are sent periodically.

61. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 48, wherein computer network is a distributed computer network.

62. (Previously presented): A multi-tier licensing system method comprising:

at remote nodes of a remote node tier, enabling users to run a licensed software program, at least some remote nodes allowing multiple users at multiple user computers of a user tier to run the licensed software program concurrently;

at the remote nodes, producing counts of the numbers of licensed software users associated with the remote nodes; and

at a master node, receiving the counts from the remote nodes and calculating a total number of licensed software users, the master node evaluating a license allocation condition using the total number of licensed software users, wherein the master mode initiates a license lockout grace period if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a maximum number of licenses.

63. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein the remote nodes and master node run licensing software.

64. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein the master node is selected as the master node from the nodes running the licensing software.

65. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein the remote nodes serve the licensed software to the users in the user tier.

66. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein a sanity scan is done on at least one subset of the remote nodes.

67. (Previously presented): The method of claim 66, wherein a scan result message is sent to the master node with at least some of the counts.

68. (Previously presented): The method of claim 67, wherein the master node checks whether the scan result messages has been received from all of the remote nodes and deallocates any licenses allocated to users of any of the nodes from which a scan result message has not been received.

69.-70. (Canceled):

71. (Previously presented): The method of claim 69, wherein the master node sends a warning

message if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a ~~predetermined value~~ limit that is less than the maximum number of licenses.

72. (Canceled):

73. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein the counts are sent to the master node asynchronously.

74. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein the counts are sent periodically.

75. (Previously presented): The method of claim 62, wherein computer network is a distributed computer network.

76. (Previously presented): A computer network including a multi-tier licensing system comprising:

- a user tier including user computers;

- a remote node tier including remote nodes enabling users to run a licensed software program, at least some remote nodes allowing multiple users at multiple user computers to run the licensed software program concurrently, the remote nodes producing indications of the software usage of the licensed software program by users associated with the remote nodes; and

- a master node tier including a master node receiving the indications from the remote nodes and calculating a total number of licensed software users, the master node evaluating a license allocation condition using the total number of licensed software users, wherein a sanity scan is done on at least one subset of the remote nodes, where a scan result message is sent to the master node with at least some of the indications, the master node checks whether the scan result messages has been received from all of the remote nodes and deallocates any licenses allocated to users of any of the nodes from which a scan result message has not been received.

77. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the remote nodes and master node run licensing software.

78. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the master node is selected as the master node from the nodes running the licensing software.

79. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the remote nodes serve the licensed software to the users in the user tier.

80-82. (Canceled)

83. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the master node compares the total number of licensed software users to a predetermined value.

84. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 83, wherein the master node initiates a license lockout grace period if the total number of licensed software users exceeds the predetermined value.

85. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 83, wherein the master node sends a warning message if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a predetermined value.

86. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 83, wherein the predetermined value is determined from a maximum number of licenses.

87. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the indications are sent to the master node asynchronously.

88. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the indications are sent periodically.

89. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein computer network is a distributed computer network.

90. (Previously presented): The computer network including a multi-tier licensing system of claim 76, wherein the indications are counts of the numbers of licensed software users associated with the remote nodes.

91. (Previously presented): A multi-tier licensing system method comprising:

at remote nodes of a remote node tier, enabling users to run a licensed software program, at least some remote nodes allowing multiple users at multiple user computers in a user tier to run the licensed software program concurrently;

at the remote nodes, producing indications of the software usage of the licensed software program by users associated with the remote nodes; and

at a master node, receiving the indications from the remote nodes and calculating a total number of licensed software users, the master node evaluating a license allocation condition using the total number of licensed software users, wherein a sanity scan is done on at least one subset of the remote nodes, where a scan result message is sent to the master node with at least some of the indications, the master node checks whether the scan result messages has been received from all of the remote nodes and deallocates any licenses allocated to users of any of the nodes from which a scan result message has not been received.

92. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the remote nodes and master node run licensing software.

93. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the master node is selected as the master node from the nodes running the licensing software.

94. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the remote nodes serve the licensed software to the users in the user tier.

95-97. (Canceled)

98. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the master node compares the total

number of licensed software users to a predetermined value.

99. (Previously presented): The method of claim 98, wherein the master node initiates a license lockout grace period if the total number of licensed software users exceeds the predetermined value.

100. (Previously presented): The method of claim 98, wherein the master node sends a warning message if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a predetermined value.

101. (Previously presented): The method of claim 98, wherein the predetermined value is determined from a maximum number of licenses.

102. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the indications are sent to the master node asynchronously.

103. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the indications are sent periodically.

104. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein computer network is a distributed computer network.

105. (Previously presented): The method of claim 91, wherein the indications are counts of the numbers of licensed software users associated with the remote nodes.

106. (New): A computer network including a multi-tier licensing system comprising:

a user tier including user computers;

a remote node tier including remote nodes enabling users to run a licensed software program, at least some remote nodes allowing multiple users at multiple user computers to run the licensed software program concurrently, the remote nodes producing counts of the numbers of licensed software users associated with the remote nodes; and

a master node tier including a master node receiving the counts from the remote nodes and calculating a total number of licensed software users, the master node evaluating a license

allocation condition using the total number of licensed software users, wherein the master node sends a warning message if the total number of licensed software users exceeds a limit that is less than the maximum number of licenses.

107. (New): The computer network of claims 106, wherein the limit is a predetermined percentage of the maximum number of licenses.